



The Holy See

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO PROF. ELIO TOAFF, CHIEF RABBI EMERITUS OF ROME
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY**

*Most Distinguished Professor Elio Toaff,
Chief Rabbi emeritus of Rome*

Your 90th birthday affords me a pleasant opportunity to offer you my heartfelt and cordial good wishes. United with you and the Jewish Community of Rome, I bless the *Eternal One* for his gift of the long and fruitful life that he has granted you, during which God has frequently manifested his goodness, and I warmly praise the Most High: "*Truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made; wonderful are your works. My soul also you knew full well* (Ps 139[138]: 13-14).

With a heart grateful to God, I thank you, most distinguished Professor, for the good relations that you have woven with the Holy See, especially during the Pontificate of my late Predecessor, Pope John Paul II. I remember joyfully the embrace with which you welcomed him at the Synagogue of Rome on 13 April 1986.

So it is that your birthday today becomes an opportunity for renewing the commitment to continuing the dialogue between us, looking with confidence to the future.

With sentiments of deep esteem, I renew to you my best wishes for this day of celebration, joining your Communities, your friends and all who love you.

From the Vatican, 30 April 2005

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